

Core Trust Seal Assignment

PROMPT: This week's short "quiz" assignment will ask you to look a bit deeper at one of the digital preservation standards in use across the world. The Core Trust Seal is a valuable way of thinking about the ways in which organizations translate preservation language into action.¹ Look for a repository which has the Core Trust Seal or a related standard. Go to the institution website and try to look at how they describe the language of preservation. How does this reflect the lessons you took away from this week's readings?

In California one institution stands out among the rest, a place that falls under the Core Trust Seal: Merritt, part of University of California (UC).² It is an "open-source digital preservation repository" which is jointly maintained by the California Digital Library (CDL) and the University of California Curation Center. It is, according to the homepage of the repository, designed not only for "open public access to digital content" but restricted access in the form of a dark archive, with all UC community members able to assist them in "managing, archiving, and/or sharing digital content." Furthermore, this repository says it assures preservation of digital content for the long term, provides support not only for "retrieval copies" but for dark archives. Also it bills itself as a high-quality and low-cost "option for meeting data sharing and preservation requirements" of projects that are grant-funded. Since this paper is focused on the language of preservation, it isn't worth highlighting certain parts on the website, specifically those that focus on request an account or related CDL services.

Since the website is relatively closed off, in that most of the information about this archival repository is stated in the homepage, one has to look on Github in order to gather more information.

¹ See <https://www.coretrustseal.org/why-certification/certifiedrepositories/>

² <https://merritt.cdlib.org/>, accessed Mar 15, 2019.

There it is described that Merritt has a number of “significant features” for digital objects said to be valuable: “permanent storage,” the ability to access via persistent URLs, long-term management tools, and an “easy-to-use interface for deposit and updates.”³ Again, they market themselves, saying they allow you to take control of your content, sharing research with others, meet data sharing (and preservation) requirements for grant-funded projects, and provide preservation in the long-term. With that, I think that the topic of preservation has been covered, so it is time to move onto this week’s readings and make the appropriate connections.

This connects directly to this week’s readings. For instance, in the Lee (2010) article about the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model, it was noted that from the 1990s onward there has been an increased awareness of “the challenges of long-term digital preservation” which have been followed by associated standards that support such a healthy infrastructure for digital preservation (pp. 4020-4024). This led to the OAIS model as it was posed as a possible solution to the woes of institutions since it was broader in scope than previous efforts, forming a new type of standard for preserving digital objects. While Merritt does not get into the complexities as much as Lee’s outline of the OAIS model, they do emphasize cooperation and shared resources, two of the four categories of the model’s archive association, with the two others being independent or federated interaction, which was one of the points I took away from the reading (p. 4025). This digital repository does this through its efforts to market itself, with a specific public image in mind, connecting to some of the ideas I took away from this reading to this digital repository without question.

The article by Poole (2016) is also relevant here. It focuses on the “unprecedented challenges of preserving digital assets across all sectors of society” and the importance of digital curators, defining

3 <https://github.com/CDLUC3/mrt-doc/wiki/About-Merritt>, accessed Mar. 15, 2019

data, different lifecycle models, sharing, researchers, data publication, rights to specific records, GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) institutions, standards, and data sustainability, to say the least (pp. 961-974). From that article, the takeaway was that digital preservation should be done in a manner that takes into account various factors, ranging for whom is curating the data, whom is publishing the data, whom has rights to the data, and how we are going to define data in the first place. Merritt, in describing itself, has some awareness of this, but with the lack of information beyond statements which try to shape how people will perceive them, it is hard to say if all these factors are being taken into account. In the end, while it is clear that more in-depth documentation would be needed to determine whether these factors are under advisement, this digital repository is a great example of the language of preservation manifested in a public institution.